

To whom it may concern;

Hello. My name is Elizabeth Fitzsimmons, a current freshman at the University of Vermont, but more importantly a Connecticut resident. I am writing today to voice my strong support for the legislative settlement from the Sheff Vs. O'Neill case.

As a high school student in Connecticut, racism was almost a facet of daily life. There were countless students who said racial slurs and I can count a multitude of times where I was taught stereotypes as fact by my teachers. I myself was a member of my high school, Farmington High's Social Justice Council, which was an opportunity I will value my entire life. In this role, I was able to further my activism tenfold, connecting and learning from activists such as Elizabeth Sheff and Attorney General William Tong, who are involved with this matter.

Having this experience, I learned an incredible amount not only about my own privilege as a white student, but about the systemic discrimination that held back my peers of color and some of my best friends in a way I could never truly understand. Still, I tried. I ask for you to do the same.

There have been rumblings that this legislation will not be passed through. This is simply unacceptable. I won't discuss why or what systemic discrimination does to these students, as it is your responsibility to know when considering this legislation, so I assume this is not necessary. Still, I do not understand how anyone looking through these years of history could question the reality that our public school system continuously fails students of color, specifically those from Hartford.

So today, I call upon you to listen to the pleas of students around the state and validate the experiences of these marginalized communities. This is only one step for a long journey, and if this can't even get passed, it says everything about our state's lack of commitment to racial justice. Our politics are already dominated by white voices and in order to truly dismantle this racial hierarchy and represent marginalized communities, this legislation must be passed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Liz Fitzsimmons (She/her)